

# Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

## Myna Matters Bulletin # 18

Dear CIMAG Members and Friends

The following provides an update on CIMAG activities:



### Myna numbers – still going down

As mentioned in the – excited - note just before Xmas, the Garden Bird Survey data from the Canberra Ornithologists Group for the 2008-09 year indicated that mynas were now down to the 14<sup>th</sup> most common bird in Canberra. This is a significant reduction from being the 3<sup>rd</sup> most common bird before we started trapping in 2006. Well done to all.

But a cautious note, before we think the job is nearly all over. A message has emerged from Kate Grarock's spring breeding data (Kate is the PhD candidate at ANU who is doing a research project on mynas, their impact and the effectiveness of our trapping program). Myna eggs and chicks in her nesting boxes in the reserves have been much higher than the previous year. Are they breeding up to take advantage of the gap that our trapping has left or is it just a good breeding season for all birds, mynas included, after the spring rains? Whatever the reason, it has meant that there are lots of juvenile mynas out and about.

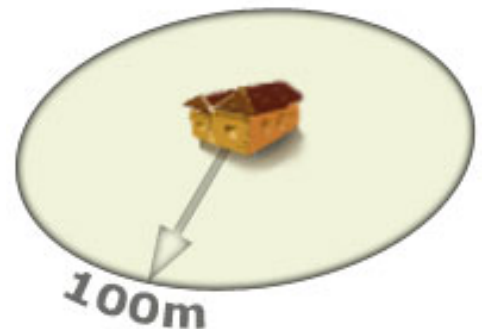
### A new myna monitoring program – counting on you to count them

Up till now, we have been really lucky that the local birdwatchers group — the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) — has been running the Garden Bird Survey (GBS) for 28 years or so. This has provided good baseline information about mynas in the Canberra environment. Survey work by Dr Chris Tidemann and his ANU students in the 1990s also provided solid data about mynas in the local area.

The CIMAG Committee now feels that CIMAG has matured to an extent where we can supplement the COG GBS survey effort with a new CIMAG monitoring program on mynas. Dr Tidemann has been keen for us to do this as a way to get better information on mynas. There are two methods that can be used: the Garden Survey method is very simple and little effort is required: it is so easy in fact that you need not leave your backyard. The Transect Count method requires the surveyor to walk the same 2km route each time.

#### *The Garden Survey Method:*

The method is to **count the maximum number of mynas** seen within a **100 metre radius of your house at any one time during a week**. You can, of course, use this method at home or anywhere else that you spend a significant amount of time, eg at work. We will work up a tally sheet for you to use.



#### *The Transect Count method:*

The second method involves **walking** (or slow bike ride) **the same route for a 2km distance and counting the mynas seen**. Many of you are likely to be out walking a regular route – with the dog or just for morning exercise. This provides a perfect opportunity to use this walk for a transect count of mynas. Because transects cover a much larger area than a garden count, they are likely to give more representative information about myna numbers. The transect walk should be around 2kms long (the walk can be more but only count mynas along the same 2km stretch), the same route every time, and ideally 100 metres wide. You need to estimate length and width reasonably accurately from a map so

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that you can estimate the area searched, because once you've counted all the mynas in that area it can be extrapolated to the number of mynas per km<sup>2</sup>.

*If you are interested in participating in this myna monitoring program, please contact **Bruce Lindenmayer on 6288 5957**. We are keen for as many members as possible to participate in this activity. We recognize that the Transect Counts may be a difficulty for many, but the Garden Survey is very easy and we can all join in doing that.*

## **Animal Welfare – always keep in the front of your mind**

Now that we are in a high trapping time with many juveniles around, CIMAG trappers are reminded of the need to adopt sound animal welfare practices: mynas are to be treated humanely: be given adequate food, water, shelter and shade. Remember, we are trapping as we want to be “kind to native animals, not cruel to Indian Mynas”.

Many people have noted that a decoy bird is more likely to make trapping successful, and so keep a bird or two in the trap. Again, please consider the welfare of the trapped birds: decoys and other birds are best not kept in the trap for more than two days. By putting a cover – such as heavy duty shadecloth – over the top and down the sides of the holding compartment, the trapped birds seem to feel less exposed and settle down much more quickly.

## **Juveniles – just waiting to be caught**

As mentioned above, there are plenty of young, naïve birds around this time of year. Best to get the trap out and catch them before they wise up.

January was a good capture month, with successful trappers reporting 1134 mynas caught for the month. Thank you to the 226 trappers that reported back to Graham Gliddon on your January figures. While not all trappers were successful, we appreciate your effort in responding to his request for figures.

Some tips might help: keep the dry dog / cat food fresh – every four days top it up so that it has a nice fresh odour: if it gets wet, replace the food; make sure there are no cats around – if you smell cat around or on the trap, hose down and re-set; ensure the trap has a clear area around it so mynas can see there are no cats lurching behind bushes. Try different food and different spots if unsuccessful in one area.

## **International Year of Biodiversity – we are doing our bit**



The United Nations has declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity. It is a celebration of life on earth and of the value of biodiversity for our lives. You can read about it on the International Year of Biodiversity website

<http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/> .

The theme of the International Year of Biodiversity is:

**Take Action in 2010:**  
**Biodiversity is life:**  
**Biodiversity is our life.**

Members of CIMAG are doing their bit to help protect and celebrate biodiversity: although there is one species here we would be happy to see extinct.

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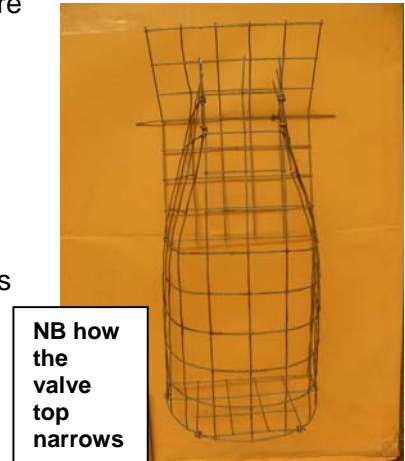
## Aspects of trap building – some things to get right

Over the past few months we have seen traps made by groups that we consider need some adjustment. We put that down to the design plans for our PeeGees trap on our website not being detailed enough. We applaud the inventiveness of groups in refining trap designs aspects, but if making the Pee Gees trap (or the variations of it) there are a few aspects that it is best to bear in mind.

Firstly, **the door to the larger containment chamber** should overlap the opening by one mesh square all the way around. Also don't make the door opening any bigger than 6 mesh squares high by 5 mesh squares wide. Any bigger makes it more difficult to have a close fitting door – mynas will easily push through any slight gap.

Secondly, the **one-way valve** should narrow down at the top. You can do this by tying the wire into the second mesh square from the sides at the top. See photo.

Thirdly, **the tunnel in the feeding chamber** should be 3 mesh squares wide on the outside, narrowing down to 2 mesh squares on the inside. This makes it harder for mynas to turn around in the tunnel to get out, and when they are inside the feeding chamber it is harder for them to see that the entrance tunnel is also an exit tunnel.



## Around the Traps

The **Hawkesbury** Indian Myna action program is a huge success story. The program is being facilitated by the Hawkesbury City Council and the Hawkesbury Men's Shed — the latter are helping to build traps. With this backing and with 8 enthusiastic and energetic Area Coordinators spread across the shire, they are having great success in educating the community and in trapping — 415 mynas were removed from the Hawkesbury in January. The efforts of Geoff Wynn, the Windsor Area Coordinator, and 10 year old, Bradley Johnson of Pitt Town, warrant special mention: Bradley spent his holidays talking to people about mynas and riding his bike around checking on traps and finding new spots for them.



The **Lane Cove** program being facilitated by Eliza Salt of the Council is now well underway after a trap building workshop at the end of November. Around twenty people from the community attended and build 15 traps. Eliza reports that the community is reporting success with trapping mynas and sharing their tips. Another trap building demonstration was held in Lane Cove last month with a good turn out and a further 40 people added to the mailing list. The new Lane Cove program also featured in an article in the North Shore Times which has generated many enquiries from the public both within the Lane Cove local government area and from other municipalities.

**Murrumbateman** Landcare Group has continued the trial of trap types for rural residential and vineyard sites that have low density myna populations. Over the past few months a number of interested landholders have requested traps and decoy birds and the trapping program has continued with captures of between 2-6 birds per trap, per property – this is the

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typical trapping rates so far on rural residential and small farms. In the upcoming weeks, as grapes ripen in the vineyards, there will be a more concerted effort to trap in targeted sites. A single trapper in the Merryville Estate outside Murrumbateman has surprised everyone by trapping nearly 80 mynas and 17 starlings in an area away from the commercial vineyards.

Tien Pham, of the **Mid North NSW Coast** project (covering the three regions of Coffs, Bellingen & Nambucca), reports good responses from the community to the program. Currently she is holding a series of public information sessions across the 3 regions, which hopefully will instill further enthusiasm for community action.

**Orange:** Cilla Kinross of Charles Sturt University has mentioned that they are in the process of establishing a control program out at Orange to try to eradicate their (so far, quite small) numbers of mynas in Orange. We wish them all the best as it would be a real shame if mynas established themselves out as far west as Orange.

**Wingecarribee:** the Bowral Community Men's Shed has been churning out the traps. They have now produced 60 traps for residents within and outside Wingecarribee Shire. Tracey Poulter from the Council reports that some 1312 mynas and 105 starlings have now been trapped in the area.

**Eurobodalla's** Indian Myna Control Program volunteer coordinators and trappers have had encouraging initial results in the first 5 months of trapping, with over 200 Indian Mynas caught. There are currently 23 coordinators monitoring the 55 traps that are in use. The Batemans Bay Men's Shed continues making traps for enthusiastic community trappers.

Many of the coordinators, trappers and a Batemans Bay Men's



Shed member recently met to share experiences to ensure the program goes from strength to strength. The Eurobodalla Council is very active in support of the program: it has approached every nursery and produce store to promote educational material to their customers. In addition, Council is providing the media with regular updates of the program to increase community participation. The dynamos in the council driving this are Courtney Fink-Downes and David Cass. In the coming months, many of the Volunteer Coordinators will undertake letterbox

drops in the Indian Myna 'hotspot' areas, talk with local schools and continue to raise the profile of the control program. A lot of Canberrans have holiday places on the Eurobodalla coast so if you want to join the program when you are down there, just contact Courtney on 02 4474 7442.

## The Tweed

Pam Gray from the Tweed Shire Council reports all is going well up there with the Tweed / Byron project. They are now up to 1950 mynas trapped. The community up there is still very inspired to work on the project. The northern rivers now has an Action Plan, that was collaboratively developed between Tweed and Byron, Lismore, Ballina, Richmond and Clarence Valley Councils, the Dept of Lands, the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, Forests NSW, NSW Dept of Environment and Climate Change, the Southern Cross University and Granite Borders, Richmond, and Kyogle LandCare groups.

**Hornsby:** Peter Franklin and I gave a presentation and trap building demonstration last Saturday at Thornleigh in Sydney, that was organised by Danielle Sutton of the Hornsby



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Council. A highly enthusiastic crowd of 90 attended the presentation, while 35 stayed on for the trap building demo. Lots of questions and, hopefully sensible, answers. With this as a core group, we can see the Hornsby Indian Myna action program taking off in a big way. Our thanks to Danielle and Anthony Newlings from the Hornsby Council for inviting us up there. The local Men's Shed had a number of traps there for sale that were quickly snapped up, as was the one that Peter and I made in the demo.

## **Macedon Ranges**

Things are starting to now move in Victoria. Courtney Fink-Downes (yes, she from Eurobodalla) and her father, Ron, who lives in the Macedon Ranges area in Victoria, gave a presentation to senior members of the Macedon Ranges Shire's environment team late last year. So impressed were they with the data and information presented that the Shire has now decided to include funding in their forward budget estimates for a myna reduction program. This will be along the lines of how Eurobodalla is doing it: the so-called "Shoalhaven Model" of integrated local government / community action that is now the model for many communities and councils in NSW. The cages will be constructed by the Kyneton Men's Shed with town-based Coordinators. There is every expectation the program will be in full swing by spring 2010. Well done Courtney and Ron for getting this happening in Victoria. Let's hope this will activate other councils in that State.

## **Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne (RBGC) in Victoria**

The wonderful Royal Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne, at the top end of the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, has commenced a 12 month Indian Myna trapping trial, as this pest species has been identified as a potential threat to the biodiversity of the site. Not only does the RBGC have an absolutely brilliant area of planted native gardens – it definitely rivals (even exceeds) the National Botanic Gardens here in Canberra – but it has some 360 hectares of almost pristine heath-lands, wetlands and woodlands that are home to thriving bird and animal life, including several rare endangered species. The trial involves:

- 12 months of trapping with a Myna Magnet trap at a fixed location
- monitoring of the trap with a motion-sensing infrared camera
- weekly birds surveys at the trap site and other set locations.

If you haven't been down to the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne put it on the itinerary for your next visit to Victoria. In fact make a special visit just for this: it is brilliant.

## **Capture Data**

The aggregate data of captures across suburbs since we commenced trapping in 2006 is now over 28,800. The suburb capture data for this period is attached: this only relates to those captures reported to CIMAG. So it is the minimum number of mynas removed from the area. We know, for instance that there have been additional captures which are not recorded here: would be good to have them all!

## **CIMAG News Distribution System**

To get onto the CIMAG news email distribution system for news and notices from the CIMAG Committee, just send a blank email to [news-subscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au](mailto:news-subscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au) and you will be automatically included on the distribution list. This will be the main way that the Committee will circulate information and notices to CIMAG members and "friends".

Bill Handke  
President  
CIMAG  
14 March 2010

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Acton	0	Hackett	168	Richardson	241
Ainslie	335	Hall	1243	Rivett	568
Amaroo	374	Harrison	69	Royalla	0
Aranda	539	Hawker	247	Scullin	109
Banks	288	Higgins	319	Spence	99
Barton	0	Holder	144	Stirling	385
Belconnen	31	Holt	204	Sutton	15
Bonython	28	Hughes	497	Swinger Hill	21
Braddon	0	Isaacs	50	Symonston	45
Bruce	13	Isabella Plains	47	Taylor	0
Burra Creek	0	Jerrabomberra	218	Tharwa	0
Bywong	9	Kaleen	678	Theodore	685
Calwell	213	Kambah	4674	Throsby	0
Campbell	146	Kambah		Torrens	298
Casey	0	Karabar	13	Turner	61
Chapman	272	Kingston	0	Wamboin	0
Charnwood	119	Latham	301	Wanniassa	783
Chifley	310	Lawson	0	Waramanga	641
Chisholm	224	Lyneham	308	Watson	156
Conder	198	Lyons	554	Weetangera	290
Cook	98	Macarthur	13	Weston	386
Crace	0	Macgregor	78	Yarralumla	266
Curtin	773	Macquarie	517	Yass	6
Deakin	224	Majura	1		
Dickson	117	Mawson	119		
Downer	90	McKellar	72		
Duffy	889	Melba	347		
Dunlop	67	Mitchell	0		
Evatt	112	Monash	506		
Fadden	447	Moncrieff	0		
Farrer	389	Murrumbateman	0		
Fisher	667	Narrabundah	468		
Florey	160	Ngunnawal	179		
Flynn	359	Nicholls	115		
Forde	0	Oaks Estate	0		
Forrest	52	O'Connor	45		
Franklin	0	O'Malley	156		
Fraser	548	Oxley	106		
Fyshwick	0	Page	158		
Garran	684	Palmerston	81		
Gilmore	130	Parkes	0		
Giralang	429	Pearce	739		
Googong	49	Phillip	0		
Gordon	201	Piallago	4		
Gowrie	10	Queanbeyan	198		
Greenway	0	Red Hill	106		
Griffith	129	Reid	12		
Gungahlin	2				

**Myna captures: aggregate captures by suburb, 2006 – Jan 2010**